

SERIAL STORY

THE HOUSE OF A THOUSAND CANDLES

By MEREDITH NICHOLSON

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CHAPTER XXI.—Continued.

Pickering's face grew white and his eyes started, and when he tried suddenly to speak his jaw twitched. The room was so still that the breaking of a blazing log on the andirons was a pleasant relief. We stood, the three of us, with our eyes on Pickering, and in my own case I must say that my heart was pounding my ribs at an uncomfortable speed, for I knew Larry was not sparing for time.

The blood rushed into Pickering's face and he turned toward Larry formally.

"This is unwarrantable and inhuman! My relations with Mr. Glenarm are none of your business. When you remember that after being deserted by his own flesh and blood he appealed to me, going so far as to intrust all his affairs to my care at his death, your reflection is an outrageous insult. I am not accountable to you or any one else!"

"Really, there's a good deal in all that," said Larry. "We don't pretend to any judicial functions. We are perfectly willing to submit the whole business and all my client's acts to the authorities."

(I would give much if I could reproach some hint of the beauty of that word authorities as it rolled from Larry's tongue!).

"Then, in God's name, do it, you blackguards," roared Pickering. Stoddard, seated on the table, knocked his heels together gently. Larry recrossed his legs and blew a cloud of smoke. Then, after a quarter of a minute in which he gazed at the ceiling with his quiet, blue eyes, he said:

"Yes; certainly, there are always the authorities. And as I have a tremendous respect for your American institutions I shall at once act on your suggestion. Mr. Pickering, the estate is richer than you thought it was. It adds, or will hold, your notes given to me as decedent for \$320,000."

He drew from his pocket a brown envelope, walked to where I stood and placed it in my hands.

At the same time Stoddard's big figure grew active, and before I realized that Pickering had leaped toward the packet, the executor was sitting in chair, where the chaplain had thrown him. He rallied promptly, stuffing his necktie into his waistcoat; he even laughed a little.

"So much old paper! You gentlemen are perfectly welcome to it."

"Thank you!" jerked Larry.

"Mr. Glenarm and I had many transactions together, and he must have forgotten to destroy those papers," continued Pickering.

"Quite likely," I remarked. "It is interesting to know that Sister Theresa wasn't his only debtor."

Pickering stopped to the door and called the sheriff.

"I will give you until to-morrow morning at nine o'clock to vacate the premises. Those claims are utterly worthless, as I am ready to prove. The court understands the situation perfectly."

"Perfectly, perfectly," repeated the sheriff.

"I believe that is all," said Larry, pointing to the door with his pipe.

The sheriff was regarding him with particular attention.

"What did I understand your name to be?" he demanded.

"Laurence Donovan," Larry replied briefly.

Pickering seemed to notice the name and his eyes lighted disagreeably. "I think I have heard of your friend before," he said, turning to me. "I congratulate you on the international reputation of your counsel. He's esteemed so highly in Ireland that they offer a large reward for his return. Sheriff, I think we have finished our business for to-day."

He seemed anxious to get the man away, and we gave them escort to the outer gate where a horse and buggy were waiting.

"Now, I'm in for it," said Larry, as I locked the gate. "We've spiked one of our guns, but I've given him a new one to use against myself. But come, and I will show you the Door of Bewilderment before I skip."

CHAPTER XXII.

A Prowler of the Night.

Down we plunged into the cellar, through the trap and to the Door of Bewilderment.

blue sky? And yonder, if you will twist your necks a bit, is the boat-house."

"Well, let the scenic effects go and show us where you found those papers," I urged.

"Speaking of mysteries, that is where I throw up my hands, lads. It's quickly told. Here is a table, and here is an old despatch box, which lies just where I found it. It was closed and the key was in the lock. I took out that packet—it wasn't even sealed—saw the character of the contents, and couldn't resist the temptation to try the effect of an announcement of its discovery on your friend Pickering. Now that is nearly all. I found this piece of paper under the tape with which the envelope was tied, and I don't hesitate to say that when I read it I laughed until I thought I should shake down the cellar. Read it, John Glenarm!"

He handed me a fragment of legal-cap paper on which was written in the unmistakable handwriting of John Marshall Glenarm, these words:

HE LAUGHS BEST WHO LAUGHS LAST.

"What do you think is so funny in this?" I demanded.

"Who wrote it, do you think?" asked Stoddard.

"Who wrote it, do you ask? Why Jack's grandfather wrote it! John Marshall Glenarm, the cleverest, grandest old man that ever lived, wrote it!" declared Larry, his voice booming loudly in the room. "It's all a great big game, fixed up to try you and Pickering—but principally you, you blockhead! Oh, it's grand, perfectly, deliciously grand—and to think it should be my good luck to share in it!"

"Humph! I'm glad you're amused,"

alone,—to consider my talk with Marian Devereux at St. Agatha's, and her return with Pickering. Why could she not always have been Olivia, ranging the woodland, or the girl in gray, or that woman, so sweet in her dignity, who came down the stairs at the Armistongs? Her own attitude toward me was so full of contradictions; she had appeared to me in so many moods and guises, that my spirit ranged the whole gamut of feeling as I thought of her. But it was the recollection of Pickering's infamous conduct that colored all my doubts of her. Pickering had always been in my way, and here, but for the chance by which Larry had found the notes, I should have had no weapon to use against him.

The wind rose and drove shrilly around the house. A bit of scaffolding on the outer walls rattled loose somewhere and crashed down on the terrace. I grew restless, my mind intent upon the many chances of the morrow, and running forward to the future. Even if I won in my strife with Pickering I had yet my way to make in the world. His notes were probably worthless—I did not doubt that. I might use them to procure his removal as executor, but I did not look forward with any pleasure to a legal fight over a property that had brought me only trouble.

Something impelled me to go below, and, taking a lantern, I tramped soberly through the cellar, glanced at the heating apparatus, and, remembering that the chapel entrance to the tunnel was unguarded, followed the corridor to the trap, and opened it. The cold air blew up sharply and I thrust my head down to listen.

A sound at once arrested me. I thought at first it must be the suction of the air, but Glenarm House was no place for conjecture, and I put the



"A Lantern Flashed Blindingly in My Face."

but it doesn't strike me as being so awfully funny. Suppose those had fallen into Pickering's hands; then where would the joke have been, I should like to know!"

"On you, my lad, to be sure! The old gentleman wanted you to study architecture; he wanted you to study his house; he even left a little pointer in an old book! Oh, it's too good to be true!"

"That's all clear enough," observed Stoddard, knocking upon the despatch box with his knuckles. "But why do you suppose he dug this hole here with its outlet on the ravine?"

"Oh, it was the way of him!" explained Larry. "He liked the idea of queer corners and underground passages. This is a bully hiding place for man or treasure, and that outlet into the ravine makes it possible to get out of the house with nobody there. It's in keeping with the rest of his scheme. Be gay, comrades! To-morrow will likely find us with plenty of business on hands. At present we hold the fort, and let us have a care lest we lose it."

We closed the ravine door, restored the wall as best we could, and returned to the library. We made a list of the Pickering notes and spent an hour discussing this new feature of the situation and speculating as to the hiding place of the remainder of my grandfather's fortune. Larry and Stoddard both declared their intention of remaining until my troubles were ended in spite of my protests. Stoddard stayed for dinner, and afterward we began again our eternal quest for the treasure, our hopes high from Larry's lucky strike of the afternoon, and with a new eagerness born of the knowledge that the morrow would certainly bring us face to face with the real crises. We ranged the house from tower to cellar; we overhauled the tunnel, for, it seemed to me, the hundredth time.

It was my watch, and at midnight, after Stoddard and Larry had reconnoitered the grounds and Bates and I had made sure of all the interior fastenings, I sent them off to bed and made myself comfortable with a pipe in the library.

"Gentlemen," he said, "we are at the edge of the ravine. Do you see the

lantern aside and jumped down into the tunnel. A gleam of light showed far away for an instant, then the darkness and silence were complete.

I ran rapidly over the smooth floor, which I had traversed so often that I knew its every line. My only weapon was a heavy hickory club. Near the Door of Bewilderment I paused and listened. The tunnel was perfectly quiet. I took a step forward and stumbled over a brick, fumbled on the wall for the opening which we had closed carefully that afternoon, and at the instant I found it a lantern flashed blindingly in my face and I drew back, crouching involuntarily, and clenching the club ready to strike.

"Good evening, Mr. Glenarm!"

Marian Devereux's voice broke the silence, and Marian Devereux's face with the full light of the lantern upon it, was bent gravely upon me. Her voice, as I heard it there,—her face, as I saw it there,—are the things that I shall remember last when my hour comes to go hence from this world. Her slim fingers, as they clasped the wire screen of the lantern, held my gaze for a second. The red tam-o'-shanter that I had associated with her youth and beauty was tilted rakishly on one side of her pretty head. To find her here, seeking, like a thief in the night, for some means of helping Arthur Pickering, was the bitterest drop in the cup. I felt as though I had been struck with a bludgeon.

"I beg your pardon!" she said, and laughed. "There doesn't seem to be anything to say, does there? Well, we do certainly meet under the most unusual, not to say unconventional, circumstances, Squire Glenarm! Please go away or turn your back. I want to get out of this donjon keep."

She took my hand coolly enough and stepped down into the passage. Then I broke out stonily.

"You don't seem to understand the gravity of what you are doing! Don't you know that you are risking your life in crawling through this house at midnight?—that even to serve Arthur Pickering a life is a pretty big thing to throw away? Your infatuation for that blackguard seems to carry you far, Miss Devereux."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

GOULD'S \$5,000 DOG KILLED



"Heath Baronet," a \$5,000 bulldog, that has been a pet in the family of George J. Gould, was poisoned recently near the Gould home, at Lakewood, N. J., and died as a result. It is suspected that the dog was poisoned by design. "Heath Baronet" had been exhibited at many shows, winning several first prizes. Mrs. Gould was very fond of the dog and was deeply affected by his death.

PRINCE DE SAGAN.

CRIMSON RECORD OF ANNA GOULD'S WOOD.

Eclipsed That of Count Boni—Once Appeared at Dinner in Paris in Role of Devil and Put Fire on Guests.

Paris.—All Paris is titillated over the prospective marriage by which Prince Helle de Sagan is to succeed Count Boni de Castellane as the husband of Anna Gould. It is characterized as "that grand joke."

Count Boni de Castellane was pretty bad in his ways, but compared to Prince de Sagan, his cousin, he is a cherub with wings only a sprout.

Since the days of the Caesars, there have been few men of such mental and emotional activity, with so many ingenious guiles and quirks of vice, as de Sagan.

Some of the little dinners, with which the prince was wont in the old days to shock even Paris, were quite

as bad as the feasts in which Tiberius delighted in his ancient dining hall, the Octagon Cenaculum.

One of these affairs, to which he invited the most flagrant rakes of the gay capital and an assortment of feminine beauty culled from the underworld illustrates his peculiar ability for this sort of thing.

Despite the outre dishes and rare wines, the feast had reached a stage where, to prevent a lapsing into the commonplace of vice, some divertissement was imperative. Then suddenly, without a word of warning, the lights went out.

The feminine shrieks were stifled by a momentary expectation when a red glow appeared at one end of the room. From out this glow danced de Sagan, clad in the red fleshings of Satan, picking his way amid the enkindling flames and shoveling gleaming coals on the heads of his guests.

Prince Helle has gone through two fortunes, left him by his two grand-

fathers. At one time he maintained 12 establishments in Paris. His love affairs run into the scores. His life, for imaginative viciousness and unscrupulous machinations to get money, is unexampled in Paris since the days of the Grand Monarch.

For years he has been without a visible means of support. He has been openly accused of being a card sharp. His name was coupled with the forgeries of notes in the name of Max Lebaudy, millionaire sugar king. In the suit brought by him against his cousins, the Castellanes, for assaulting him, Count Boni openly charged that he derived his finances from certain women of Paris.

Altogether it is said he has fought a hundred duels. Eight of them at least were with men of prominence in Paris. One was with Prince George Stourdza, whom he first slapped one night in the lobby of the opera house, and later wounded.

At another time he pummeled Maitre Barbox for having declared that the beautiful Mme. De Gast, with whom at the time the prince was engaged, had posed in the nude for Gervex's famous picture, "The Woman in the Mask." Barbox had him arrested and fined \$100 in the police court, but ignored his challenge.

Following the recent encounter with de Castellane the latter declared there would be no duel as a result of it, as "nowadays Prince de Sagan can find no seconds to represent him." There was no duel.

De Sagan several years ago denounced Prince de Chalais, who married Miss Beatrice Winans of Baltimore, as an impostor, claiming the title for himself. Later he challenged the prince, who declared de Sagan beneath his notice. The prince still bears the title.

In the height of his career de Sagan added spice to his existence by hunting up provocations for issuing a challenge. When the excitement of other pleasures palled, he would, if necessary, deliberately give the insult to invite a challenge.

In recent years he has figured in few such meetings. Lack of funds has curbed his impetuosity.

Prince Helle's wooing of Mme. Gould has been systematic and carefully determined. From the beginning of her trouble with her husband the prince has been Mme. Gould's guide and sympathizer. He has been almost constantly in her society. He knows women well, and was able to say the right things at the right time to soothe her ruffled feelings and quiet her unstrung nerves.

Mme. Gould became deeply touched with his apparent devotion. More to the point, he neither conspired her, as did her family, nor abused her, as did the count.

The prince comes of an old family. Generations of azure blood flow in his veins. His family is as noble in Prussia as in France. Prinz von Sagan is his German title. Eventually he will succeed to the duchy of Sagan in Prussian Silesia, now held by his father, the duke de Tallyrand-Perigord. The income was \$400,000 a year until the old duke's creditors got hold of it all save \$4,000 a year.

GOLD IN PICKLE BARREL.

Widow of an Inventor Discovers Great Riches Unexpectedly.

Alameda, Cal.—Finding a pickle barrel full of \$20 gold pieces was the delightful experience of the widow of H. A. Graff of 1515 Sixth street, West Alameda, while exploring her cellar a day or two since.

Graff, while hurrying to catch a train at the Third street station on February 1, was seized with an attack of heart failure and died at the Oakland mole. He had, during his lifetime, frequently remarked to his wife that they would soon have enough in the barrel to get back to their former home in Germany and live for the rest of their days.

This reference was never understood by his wife, and it now develops that Graff had invented a mechanical attachment for a piano, which brought him in money from time to time. The money he stored in the pickle barrel and died too suddenly to divulge the secret.

Mrs. Graff had no idea of the existence of the unusual receptacle of wealth and found it quite by accident, thus becoming many thousand dollars richer.

QUEER FAD OF OLD MINER.

Proposes Each Year to Stenographer of Oregon's Governor.

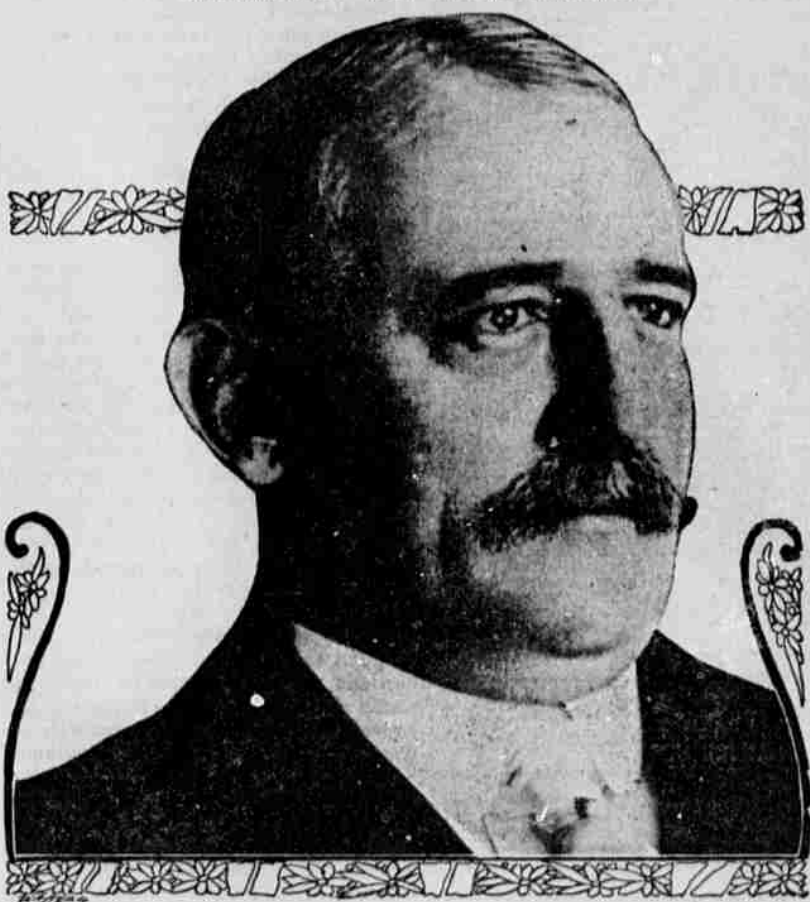
Portland, Ore.—Annual proposals of marriage are made by Bohemia Sharpe, an old miner, to the stenographer of Oregon's governor, whoever she may be. Sharpe has just made his yearly visit to the state capitol, and incidentally called at the executive office and made a formal offer of his heart and hand to Gov. Chamberlain's stenographer.

As has been the case many times in the past, the offer was refused, but it is expected that the hardy old mountaineer will return next spring to renew his overtures.

Sharpe is now over 70 years of age, but is still an active prospector. He has a claim and a cabin in the mountains of the Bohemia district, 25 miles from Cottage Grove. It is said that he is quite wealthy, but his riches do not help to dispel the loneliness of his isolated home.

Just why his fancy has settled on wedding a stenographer of the state's chief executive is not known, but his persistent proposals have been the cause of no little amusement around the capitol.

MINISTER TO VENEZUELA



Copyright by Weldon Fawcett. William W. Russell, envoy of the United States to the republic of Venezuela, is again pressing President Castro for a settlement of American claims that have long been pending. Minister Russell has held his present post since 1905; from 1904 to 1905 he was minister to Colombia.

GOES THROUGH A BRICK WALL

Switch Engine Suddenly Runs Amuck in Roundhouse.

Stamford, Conn.—Switch engine No. 2,543, of the New Haven railroad, went on the rampage in the roundhouse here the other afternoon while standing with steam up. Two machinists were tinkering with the sand-pipe and air apparatus.

As the engine suddenly began to move back towards an open turntable, one of the machinists jumped into the cab and reversed the engine in time to prevent it going into the turntable. Instead it sped forward towards the two-foot brick wall of the roundhouse. The machinist was unable to stop the engine, there being no air in the tank and it crashed into the

brick wall and tore right through it, out upon the sidewalk. A hole 13 feet high by nine feet wide was made in the solid masonry. The cowcatcher and headlight of the engine were torn off.

The roundhouse was filled with escaping steam and one or two of the roundhouse employees were scalded. A leaky throttle started the engine in the first place.

Save Time.

The Parson—I intend to pray that you may forgive Casey for throwing that brick at you.

The Patient—Mebbe yer riv'rence 'ud be saving time if ye'd wait 'll Oi git well, and then pray for Casey.—The Universalist Leader.